

THE WILLIAM ROCKHILL NELSON GALLERY OF ART

AND ATKINS MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

N E W S F L A S H E S

April 1 - 30,

1936

CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN PAINTING: The group of contemporary American paintings which opened in the north and south loan galleries on Sunday is already creating great interest. It is a section of the exhibition which was held last fall at the Art Institute of Chicago, and which created such diverse opinions. A number of outstanding artists have contributed their latest and finest canvases to it.

Everyone will regret that the first prize winner, "Thanksgiving Dinner" by Doris Lee, is not included, but there are many others equally interesting. Kansas City will be very glad of the opportunity to see Thomas Hart Benton's new canvas "Romance", in which he has been especially successful in creating space and depth and a vibrant luminosity in a painting that has also a touch of humor. John Steuart Curry's "Mother and Father" is a fine and sincere portrait of his parents, done fairly early in 1934, but a success in colour and composition. The view from the window is especially fine and characteristic, with its Kansas corral, a silo and a windmill.

"Eve and Eleanor" by Jerry Farnsworth is a fine traditional portrait, very much in the style of Sargent or Speicher, and shows technical proficiency and fine colouring. From a point of view of distinguished brushwork, "The Painter" by E. W. Tomlin is noteworthy and his deep colour harmony recalls the work of Brook. Margaret Zorach, who is perhaps better known as a clever artist in black and white, contributes a "Bridge to the Island" which is almost an abstraction in flat, rich colours. A "Portrait" by Annot is a most original conception, in which the formal dress contrasts strangely with the background which is a view of the East River.

One of the finer younger artists, Raphael Soyer, is represented by "Intimate Interior" which is lovely in colour, and the painting of the figure in the background is excellent. "Figure with Fruit" by Pougilis, the Chicago artist who has lately been winning a number of prizes, is rich in its glowing colours. It is interesting to note that there is less stress on the American Scene, but "Street, River and Bridge" by Saul Berman is purely national, and has a fine composition distinguished by clear, rain-washed colours.

"Upper Studio" by that dependable artist, Dorothy Varian, has some highly satisfying passages of painting and the colour is lovely and sensitive. Another woman painter, Marjorie Phillips, has contributed a "Landscape with Pine" that is exquisite in its tonalities and has definite decorative qualities.

The exhibition will remain through the month of April. An excellent opportunity is offered Kansas City to see the contemporary painting of both America and France in adjoining rooms, and the Gallery is asking visitors to state their preference on ballots that will be supplied by the guards.

FRENCH PAINTING: Continued study and acquaintance with the group of French 20th Century paintings now on exhibition in the central loan gallery, convinces one of its very superior quality. Rarely has one seen three finer Cézannes. The landscape "Houses at Aix" is of his middle period, in which the paint is applied thinly and the predominance of warm oranges suggests the heat of Provence. The complicated planes of the house are superbly handled and their solidity contrasts sharply with the lightness of the trees. The "Still Life" is one of his most monumental compositions and recalls Bulliet's contention that "an apple by Paul Cézanne is of more consequence artistically than the head of a Madonna by Raphael.

The group of Renoir canvases is particularly satisfying. The "Gabrielle", now become a classic, is surely one of his most successful passages of luminous, pearly flesh tones against a subtle background. The two flower pieces are gloriously rich in their full, sonorous colourings, and the "Girl in Striped Dress" which is

being seen in America for the first time, is a sensitive, appealing study of a young girl with Renoir's significant greens and blues.

The versatile and protean Picasso is represented by an "Entombment" of his blue period which is based on a Renaissance composition and is poignant and moving in spite of its abstraction. His "At The Races" is subtly humorous and gives a new insight of his many sided genius. The "Head", certainly surrealist in its amorphous shape and its Freudian approach, is superbly painted and an exquisite colour harmony.

The early "St. Michel Bridge" of Matisse shows the influence of Gauguin in its flat areas of colours, and contrasts sharply with the later and sophisticated "Odalisque" with its eastern influence of pattern and its almost new emotions produced by the masterly juxtaposition of colours. The purely intellectual designs by Braque with their rich, subdued tonalities and the disturbing, yet hauntingly lovely and refined portraits by Modigliani complete an exhibition which no one should miss.

This group of six artists will remain on exhibition until April 13th.

FOURTH ANNUAL WOODCUT EXHIBITION: With the cooperation of the President of the Woodcut Society, the Gallery is holding the first showing of the fourth annual exhibition of the Society. It will remain on view for the month of April in Gallery XVI and then will be circulated throughout the country. The group this year is especially fine and includes the work of American, English, Polish and Austrian artists. The wood engravings by T. W. Mason, Grace Albee and J. J. Lankes are exceptionally good and demonstrate how well adapted this technique is to sensitively conceived landscapes.

There is a noticeable leaning towards coloured woodcuts, and many striking and original effects have been achieved. Norbertine von Bresslern-Roth has sent a round dozen of her newest plates from Austria, and they are beautiful in colour and pattern. Both Glenn and Treva Wheete have contributed a number of representative coloured woodcuts that reproduce in an extraordinary way the tones of paintings.

MASTERPIECES: For the week of April 5th, the masterpiece will be a pair of French 18th century colour prints which are being shown for the first time. Exquisitely coloured paintings were such an integral part of interior decoration during the 1700s in France, that exact reproductions of them were sought for those who could not afford originals. The invention of the tone process of aquatint enabled the graphic artists to duplicate in a print all the colours of the canvases of Boucher and Fragonard. The artist who developed this process to its highest achievement was Charles Melchior Des-courties, and two of his finest plates, "The Village Wedding" and "The Village Fair", are being featured. They catch all the charm and delicate refinement of the age of Louis XV and aesthetically rank with the paintings of that period.

During Easter week a group of decorated Chinese porcelains of the Ming Period will be featured as the masterpiece. A large square vase with sides ornamented in five colour has all the depth and brilliance of tone typical of 16th century Chinese porcelain. Two flask-shaped vases with slender necks in blue and white of the same period are representative of a type of ware so popular in Europe during the 17th century. A delicate bowl of the "Old Moon Studio" type, its egg-shell thickness the acme of fine potting and dainty decoration, will also be shown in the group. This fragile bowl was made especially for the court during the reign of the Emperor Yung Cheng (1723-35).

For the week of April 19th, the masterpiece will be a Chinese screen in polychrome against a white background. It is a superb example of that famous carved lacquer which found its way to Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries from the eastern seaboard of India, known as the Coromandel Coast. There are a large number of so-called "Coromandel" screens in present day collections. However, of this number fewer than half a dozen known examples are ornamented with a white background. The beautiful flower and bird panels are representative of the best type of Chinese decorative art.

A drawing from the permanent collection, which has recently taken on added importance, is being featured as the masterpiece for the week of April 26th. It is the sketch of a knight on horseback by Van Dyke, and comes from the famous Kock Collection. This summer while in Europe, the Director found in the Lichtenstein Collection in Vienna, the painting for which this was undoubtedly the original study.

In addition to this equestrian being an important example of the draftsmanship of the great Flemish artist, there are two other sketches on the reverse of the paper, a fine head of a boy, brushed in surely and swiftly in wash, and the faint pencil sketch of a seated man in cardinal's robes. It is hoped that one day these, too, may be identified.

WEDNESDAY EVENING LECTURES: On Wednesday evening, April 8th, Mr. Gardner will lecture on French Twentieth Century Paintings, as exemplified by the current loan exhibition.

Whether we applaud it or not, the School of Paris is still the most important factor in present day painting. The various movements that lead up to the "housecleaning" cubism which considered painting as architecture and placed it on a purely intellectual basis will be discussed. The latest trend of the Neo-Romantics and the Sur-Realists which is away from the intellectual appeal of cubism towards a more emotional approach to art by means of a literary, anecdotal subject matter, will also be noted. It is a fascinating, vitally interesting subject and the material will be developed by means of a new series of slides.

Chinese porcelains of the 15th to 18th centuries will be the subject of Mr. Sickman's lecture on April 15th. This is the period of polychrome decorated wares and the famous blue and white which is so often depicted in Dutch still-life paintings of the 17th century.

Mr. Sickman's lecture on Wednesday night, April 22nd will be on the art of China's last great native dynasty, the Ming Emperors, who ruled from 1368 to 1644. Our temple ceiling, wall painting, and the large wooden figure of Kuan Yin will be subjects of special interest that evening.

It is only in the past five years that a definite interest in Old Master drawings has developed in America. This is brought out by the fact that Boston and the Metropolitan, renowned in all other fields, both have practically no important drawings. Only at this time is Boston trying to remedy this by means of an important purchase from the great Albertina Collection of Vienna. The Metropolitan added a group of fifty odd drawings by Goya only a short time ago, and this series is the most important of its drawings.

We are fortunate at the Gallery in having a distinguished if small group which includes Perugino, Van Dyke, Claude Lorrain, Tiepolo, Watteau, Boucher, Fragonard, Hubert Robert, and a number of 19th century artists. The fascinating and personal field of drawings will be the subject of Mr. Gardner's lecture on Wednesday evening, April 23th.

ENGLISH LUSTRE WARE: Through the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. F. P. Burnap, there is being exhibited in the South Corridor a superb group of English Lustre Ware from their collection. Perhaps the most popular of the many branches of English pottery, the group includes silver, canary, and coloured lustre. A number of the pieces are decorated with scenes after Morland and some reflect the popularity of Chinese subjects. It is one of the largest and most complete collections of this ware in America and the Gallery is honored to be able to show it.

The lustre ware is exhibited in three beautiful old cabinets which Mr. and Mrs. Burnap have most generously presented to the Gallery collection. The Silver Lustre is in a Sheraton Mahogany Cabinet which came from Scotland and which dates from the end of the 18th century. A pair of superb mahogany cabinets, which were designed by Thomas Hope in 1807 for the library of a house in Oxford, contains the Canary and the Coloured Lustre. This pair is typical of the early English Regency furniture which has become so popular in the last year for interior decoration.

THE FRIENDS OF ART: A membership drive, with a goal of 500, is being started by The Friends of Art. It is hoped that many of the regular readers of News Flashes will want to join this organization which is making such a vital contribution to both the Gallery and the students of The Art Institute by adding examples of contemporary art to the permanent collection.

Membership includes a year's subscription to the Art Digest, an excellent medium for keeping up with what is being done today in the world of art, and free attendance to the discussion classes on modern art that are held every second Thursday in the Gallery under the guidance of Mr. Gardner and members of the staff. The next meeting of this class will be on April 9th, at 11:15 A.M.

THE KANSAS CITY PRINT CLUB: The next meeting of the Print Club will be held in the Atkins Auditorium on Monday evening, April 6th, at 8:00 P.M. Mr. Paul Gardner will discuss a group of the outstanding fifteenth century woodcuts and engravings in the permanent collection. Many of the greatest names of this century, Master E.S., Schongauer, Dürer, Pollaiuolo, Mantegna, Jacopo da Barbari, and Duvet are represented by superb impressions.

The group of chiaroscuro woodcuts from the Horace M. Swope collection which is being exhibited in galleries XIII and XV under the auspices of the Print Club will continue until April 15th. It will be interesting to compare some of these early examples with the contemporary coloured woodcuts in the adjoining galleries.

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES: The winter session of the Saturday morning classes for children will close on Saturday, April 25th - not to be resumed until the summer session starts in June. Since the true purpose of the gallery classes, namely, a heightened understanding, enjoyment, and appreciation of the objects in the collection, is too intangible to be displayed - there will be no exhibition of the children's work. The sketches, weaving, soap carving, woodblocks, pottery and so forth, have been merely a means to prompt close observation and understanding of the masterpieces and therefore it is felt should not be judged in an exhibition.

There is one exception - nearly 150 children have been learning about the Gallery collection through the construction and costuming of marionettes, basing their designs on figures and motives on objects in the Gallery. From this number casts have been chosen for five original plays, based on stories from objects in the collection, and written and directed by Miss Lindsay Hughes of the staff. On Saturday, April 11th at 10:00 A.M. in the Atkins Auditorium, the first play, "Shun, Son of Heaven", inspired by the reliefs on the Lady Yuan sarcophagus in the Chinese collection, will be presented. The following two Saturday mornings at the same hour, "Bahrum Gur", a Persian play, and "Waiting", the life of Millet; "Phaeton and Apollo" and "St. George and the Dragon" will be enacted by the children. Parents, friends, and patrons of the Gallery are cordially invited to attend these performances, for which there will be no charge.

Tuesday, April 7th, will see the beginning of the last schedule for sixth grade classes from the public schools, which will continue until the 27th of May. With the study of stained glass, blown glass, and pottery, this lesson concludes the series of four visits some four thousand sixth grade pupils and teachers have made to the gallery this winter.

The American History tours, through the American period rooms and American painting gallery, for the seventh grade pupils, will continue through the month of April.

LOANS: Our panel of "St. George and St. Wolfgang" by The Hausbuch Master, one of the most important German primitives in America, is being lent to the Brooklyn Museum for its important exhibition of 15th Century European paintings during May.

The Kansas State Teachers College of Emporia is holding an exhibition of contemporary American painting to which the Gallery has lent "The Dead Pheasant" by Poor, "Stallion and Jack" by Curry and a "Landscape" by Lawson. In connection with the exhibition, Mr. Gardner is giving a lecture at the College on Contemporary Art on April 2nd.

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MUSICAL PROGRAMS: The April concert of Tau Chapter of Sigma Alpha Iota will be presented at three-thirty on Sunday afternoon, the 19th. The program will consist of works by modern American composers, in keeping with the current loan exhibition of contemporary American painting.

On Sunday, April 26th at three-thirty, the Conservatory of Music will present the very lovely and well-known cantata "The Rose Maiden" by Cowen. The solo parts will be taken by Rose Ann Carr, soprano; Gladys McCoy Taylor, Contralto; John Wahlstedt, tenor; and David Grosch, baritone, supported by the Conservatory chorus.

Both concerts will be held in the Atkins Auditorium and the public is invited. The growing attendance at these Sunday afternoon concerts attests to their popularity and is most gratifying to both the Gallery staff and the performers.

VISITORS: Among the interesting visitors to the Gallery this month have been Miss Myra Hess, Miss Irene Rich, Mme. Tatiana Tchernavin and Mr. Thomas Handforth. Mme. Tchernavin was formerly assistant curator at the Hermitage Museum in Moscow and was naturally much interested in the work we are doing here. She expressed particular enthusiasm over our educational work with the school children. Visitors to the print galleries will remember Mr. Handforth for his distinguished drawings and lithographs of Oriental subjects displayed here early in the month.

CALENDAR FOR APRIL

Wed., April 1	- 2:00	- Classical Art	Mr. Freeman
	8:00	- Chinese Porcelains of the Sung Dynasty	Mr. Sickman
Thurs., "	2 - 2:00	- Chinese Bronzes and Paintings	Mr. Sickman
Fri., "	3 - 2:00	- Prints	Mr. Wittmann
Sat., "	4 - 2:00	- Radio Talk W9XBY	
Mon., "	6 - 8:00	- Kansas City Print Club	
Tues., "	7 - 2:00	- French Colour Prints	Mr. Gardner
Wed., "	8 - 2:00	- Near Eastern Art	Miss Hughes
	8:00	- French 20th Cen. Painting	Mr. Gardner
Thurs., "	9 -11:15	- Friends of Art Discussion Group	Mr. Gardner
	2:00	- Chinese Sculpture and Temple	Mr. Sickman
Fri., "	10 - 2:00	- Spanish Painting	Mr. Freeman
Sat., "	11 -10:10	- Marionette Play by children of Sat. classes	
	2:00	- Radio Talk W9XBY	
Tues., "	14 - 2:00	- Chinese Porcelain of Ming Period	Mr. Sickman
Wed., "	15 - 2:00	- Dutch-Flemish-German Ptg.	Mr. Freeman
	8:00	- Porcelain of Ming Period	Mr. Sickman
Thurs., "	16 - 2:00	- Chinese Ceramics	Mr. Sickman
Fri., "	17 - 2:00	- American Wing	Miss Jackson
Sat., "	18 -10:10	- Marionette Play by children of Sat. classes	
	2:00	- Radio Talk W9XBY	
Sun., "	19 - 3:30	- Concert by Tau Chapter of Sigma Alpha Iota	
Tues., "	21 - 2:00	- Chinese Lacquer Screen	Mr. Sickman
Wed., "	22 - 2:00	- American Indian Art	Miss Hughes
	3:00	- The Ming Period in China	Mr. Sickman
Thurs., "	23 -11:15	- Friends of Art Discussion Group	Mr. Gardner
Fri., "	24 - 2:00	- English and French Painting	Mr. Wittmann
Sat., "	25 -10:10	- Marionette Play by children of Sat. Classes	
Sun., "	26 - 3:30	- Cantata "The Rose Maiden"	K. C. Conservatory Music
Tues., "	28 - 2:00	- Van Dyke Drawing	Mr. Gardner
Wed., "	29 - 2:00	- Classical Art	Mr. Freeman
	3:00	- Old Master Drawings	Mr. Gardner
Thurs., "	30 - 2:00	- Chinese Bronzes and Paintings	Mr. Sickman